

2009 Louisiana Net Migration in National and Historical Context

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Executive Summary

- From July 1, 2008 to July 1, 2009, Louisiana gained 18,123 residents through positive net migration (i.e. more moved into the state than moved out).
- This is the first time we have had consistent positive net migration since 1981.
- The migration we are seeing is likely not a result of post Katrina repopulation and is likely due to our favorable unemployment rate relative to the rest of the country. The unemployment rate in Louisiana for 2008 was 4.6% which is 1.2% lower than the nation rate of 5.8%.
- Because of our favorable migration, we are ~5,000 people away from our pre-Katrina population and should be at Pre-Katrina levels before July 1, 2010.
- For the decade, Louisiana leads the nation in migration based population loss (negative net migration largely due to Katrina).
- The net migration between 2005-2009 is not unprecedented for Louisiana. Between 1985 and 1990, Louisiana lost between 250,000-300,000 residents to negative net migration. Louisiana's 1985 population was 4,408,118 and we did not cross the 4.4 million threshold again until 1997.
- Despite the favorable migration trends, we will still likely lose national representation during the redistricting in 2010.
- Though we do not know much about those who moved to Louisiana between 2008 and 2009, data on the 2007-2008 migration stream indicate that we are losing persons with Bachelor's and Graduate degrees and gaining people with Associate's degrees, some college, high school diploma's only, and people not completing high school. Also, the household income of immigrants is lower than that of the outmigrants.

Louisiana Migration, 2000-2009

Few issues captivate the Louisiana policy and business community like the topic of migration. Populations change due to three factors: birth, death, and migration. Louisiana routinely has more births than deaths. The difference between these two factors is referred to as natural increase. Louisiana routinely has more births than deaths (i.e. positive natural increase). Louisiana is not unique in this respect. With the exception of West Virginia, all U.S. states during the 2000s had positive natural increase.¹

In terms of migration, Louisiana has fared well in the years following the Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. A key migration measure is *net migration*, which refers to the difference between the number of persons migrating into and out of the state. The Census Bureau differentiates between two types of migration, international and domestic. Interstate migration measures the flow of persons within the U.S., whereas international migration measures the flow of persons into and out of the U.S. Net interstate migration is a key socioeconomic indicator because it measures Louisiana's national competitiveness as a place to live and work.

In 2009 Louisiana experienced population growth through net migration.² Table 1 reports net international migration, net domestic migration, net total migration, and the net total migration rate per 1,000 persons, and the total population of Louisiana. The data show that in 2009, Louisiana had positive net migration (i.e. more moved in than moved out). Migration data for 2009 are based on persons who moved between July 1, 2008 and July 1, 2009. It is also important to note that Louisiana has had two consecutive years of positive net migration. This has not occurred since the early 1980s and is discussed in more detail below.

These findings are noteworthy because the migration trends we are now observing are likely not a product of repopulation of storm damaged areas. Rather, we are now observing migration that is likely due to the attractiveness of the state. Demographers studying migration often look at the factors that may push people away from an area and attract people to a destination. An important pull factor for Louisiana is that our unemployment rate compares favorably to the rest of the nation. Louisiana's unemployment rate in 2008 was 4.6% which is 1.2% lower than the nation rate of 5.8%.³

National Context

Louisiana is demographically unique in the decade of the 2000s because it is a national leader in the loss of population through migration due in large part to the hurricanes in 2005.⁴ This is important for two reasons. First, the national growth rate was 9.1% and 19 states had a growth rate that exceeded the national rate. Louisiana's population growth from 2000-2009 was 0.5%.

¹ 2009 Population Estimates Data obtained at <http://www.census.gov/popest/states/states.html> on 12-23-09.

² 2009 Population Estimates Data obtained at <http://www.census.gov/popest/states/states.html> on 12-23-09.

³ Bureau of Labor Statistics last accessed on 12-23-09 <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/srgune.nr0.htm>

⁴ 2009 State Population Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau last accessed on 12-23-09
<http://www.census.gov/popest/states/states.html>

Strong growth outside of Louisiana indicates that Louisiana is likely at risk to lose a congressional district when the U.S. is reapportioned at the end of 2010.

A second concern is that recent migration data from the Census Bureau suggests that interstate migration from 2007-2008 is not uniform across the socioeconomic spectrum. Although Louisiana has gained total population through net migration, there is variation among those age 25 and older (i.e. persons who have likely completed their formal education). Data from the 2008 American Community Survey demonstrates that Louisiana is losing highly educated residents and gaining persons that have not completed high school, completed only high school, or those that have some college or an Associate's degree.⁵ This is a key issue in terms of state revenue because the household income of immigrants (\$37,529) is less than that of outmigrants (\$45,949).⁶ Higher income families contribute more state revenue through income and sales tax than lower income families.

Historical Context

Although the hurricanes of 2005 generated population turmoil in Louisiana, similar large scale outmigration events have occurred in recent history. Between 1985 and 1990, Louisiana's population lost 250,654 persons age five and older to net outmigration to other states.⁷ Other migration data estimate the total net migration during these years to be over 300,000.⁸ The population of Louisiana in 1985 was 4,408,118 and had declined to 4,219,973 by the end of the decade.⁹ Louisiana did not again cross the 4.4 million resident threshold until 1997.¹⁰

On July 1, 2005, Louisiana's population was 4,497,691 (less than 100,000 above the population in 1985).¹¹ Although it is unknown what Louisiana's population was in the months following Hurricane Katrina, the Census Bureau estimated Louisiana's population to be 4,240,327 in July of 2006.¹² In 2009, Louisiana's population has reached 4,492,076 representing a 99.9% recovery of the pre-Katrina population (difference of ~5,000 persons). Without question, Hurricane Katrina is the most severe natural disaster in U.S. history. However, Louisiana has been able to recover population from this disaster more rapidly than it did from the economic downturn of the 1980s. Moreover, Louisiana has reversed trends following Katrina such that the state has net gains in population from interstate migration.

⁵ 2008 American Community Survey accessed on 12-22-09 from American Fact Finder at www.census.gov.

⁶ Internal Revenue Service Migration Data accessed on 12-23-09 at <http://www.irs.gov/taxstats/article/0,,id=212702,00.html>.

⁷ 1990 Census tabulations on geographical mobility last accessed on 12-21-09 <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/migration/net-mig.txt>

⁸ 1980-1989 Population Estimates Program last accessed on 12-21-09 <http://www.census.gov/popest/archives/1980s/8090com.txt>

⁹ 1980-1989 Population Estimates Program last accessed on 12-21-09 <http://www.census.gov/popest/archives/1980s/8090com.txt>

¹⁰ Data obtained from the 1990-2008 Bridged Population Estimates accessed 12-21-09 <http://wonder.cdc.gov/wonder/help/bridged-race.html#>

¹¹ 2009 Population Estimates Data obtained at <http://www.census.gov/popest/states/states.html> on 12-23-09.

¹² 2009 Population Estimates Data obtained at <http://www.census.gov/popest/states/states.html> on 12-23-09.

Table 1. Net Migration Data for Louisiana 2000-2009

	2000	20001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
International	1,221	4,134	3,122	792	4,885	3,722	4,582	3,436	3,676	3,476
Domestic	-7,443	-33,909	-18,965	-10,659	-9,956	-14,404	-282,254	29,970	14,162	14,647
NetMig	-6,222	-29,775	-15,843	-9,867	-5,071	-10,682	-277,672	33,406	17,838	18,123
Net Migration Rate per 1000	N/A	-6.7	-3.5	-2.2	-1.1	-2.4	-63.6	7.8	4.0	4.1
Population	4,468,979	4,460,816	4,466,068	4,474,726	4,489,327	4,497,691	4,240,327	4,376,122	4,451,513	4,492,076

2009 Population Estimates Data obtained at <http://www.census.gov/popest/states/states.html> on 12-23-09